

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PHNOM 00603 111234Z

42

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

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USIA-06 ACDA-05 IO-10 AID-05 SY-04 /079 W

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R 110940Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8874

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 603

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, CB

SUBJECT: FANK CASUALTIES

REF: PHNOM PENH 544

1. SUMMARY: FANK TOOK AT LEAST 650 KILLED, 200 MISSING IN ACTION AND 2,000 WOUNDED IN THE FIRST PHASE OF THE KC DRY SEASON OFFENSIVE (JANUARY 1-8). THIS IS ABOUT HALF OF ESTIMATED KC CASUALTIES (REFTEL) DURING THE SAME PERIOD. END SUMMARY.

2. FANK REPORTS THAT IN THE PERIOD JANUARY 1-8, THEY SUSTAINED 650 KILLED AND 1,750 WOUNDED AND HOSPITALIZED IN PHNOM PENH. PAST EXPERIENCE SHOWS THAT 200 OF THESE WOUNDED WILL DIE. ANOTHER 250 WOUNDED PROBABLY STAYED WITH THEIR UNITS; THEY ARE EITHER IN DIVISION HOSPITALS OR ARE AMBULATORY BUT NOT FIT FOR COMBAT. AN ADDITIONAL 200 MEN ARE MISSING, MOST FROM KHMER NAVY POSITIONS ALONG THE BANKS OF THE LOWER MEKONG. KILLED AND MISSING-IN-ACTION REPORTS ARE NOT IN FROM MOST UNITS OF THE 7TH DIVISION OR FROM THE 36TH BRIGADE, THE LATTER OF WHICH THE KC SMASHED AS THEY CUT ROUTE 1 BETWEEN PHNOM PENH AND NEAK LUONG.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 PHNOM 00603 111234Z

3. ALTHOUGH THE 7TH DIVISION HAS NOT YET REPORTED

ITS DEAD AND MISSING, WE ESTIMATE IT HAS HAD ONE BRIGADE CRIPPLED AND CAN NOW FIELD TWO 3-BATTALION BRIGADES AND ONE 2-BATTALION BRIGADE.

4. FANK CASUALTIES NORTHEAST OF PHNOM PENH AND ON THE MEKONG'S EAST BANK ACROSS FROM THE CAPITAL ARE HEAVY. THE 84TH BRIGADE TOOK THE BRUNT OF THE LOSSES BUT IS STILL OPERATIONAL. THE FOUR PARATROOP BATTALIONS HAVE LOST CLOSE TO A BATTALION EQUIVALENT--30 KILLED AND ABOUT 200 WOUNDED.

5. BETWEEN THE MEKONG AND THE BASSAC RIVERS, THE 36TH BRIGADE IS NOW COMPLETELY OUT OF ACTION AND HAS RETIRED TO THE NORTH OF PHNOM PENH. (AN UNCONFIRMED CASUALTY ESTIMATE FOR THE 36TH BRIGADE HAS 380 KILLED, WOUNDED AND MISSING.) THE BASSAC OPERATION IN LATE 1974 DEPLETED THE 1ST DIVISION AND THE TWO BRIGADES OF THE 2ND DIVISION. BOTH DIVISIONS TOOK ONLY LIGHT CASUALTIES LAST WEEK BUT THE 1ST DIVISION IS NEVERTHELESS NOT YET FULLY CAPABLE; THE 2ND DIVISION HAS ONLY ONE BRIGADE CAPABLE OF OFFENSIVE ACTION.

6. WEST OF PHNOM PENH ON EITHER SIDE OF ROUTE 4, THE 3RD DIVISION HAD NO SERIOUS LOSSES.

7. REPLACING THESE LOSSES IS A MATTER OF HIGH FANK PRIORITY. BETWEEN JANUARY 1-10 FANK INCORPORATED 850 NEW RECRUITS AND HAS SO FAR SENT 300 OF THEM TO TRAINING CENTERS. THE NUMBER OF RECRUITS SENT TO TRAINING CENTERS IN DECEMBER EXCEEDED LOSSES BY 1,400 MEN. MOST OF THE DECEMBER RECRUITS WILL END TRAINING THIS MONTH AND BE AVAILABLE FOR ASSIGNMENT TO COMBAT UNITS. THE 7TH DIVISION HAS ALREADY RECEIVED 250 OF 500 PROMISED NEW REPLACEMENTS. THESE RAW TROOPS WILL INITIALLY BE USED TO GUARD REAR AREAS.

8. COMMENT: THE INCOMPLETE FANK CASUALTY FIGURES OVER THE PERIOD JANUARY 1-8 HAVE NEARLY EQUALED THE COMBINED TOTAL OF CASUALTIES FOR DECEMBER, 1973, AND JANUARY, 1974, WHICH WERE THE TWO MOST ACTIVE MONTHS OF LAST

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 PHNOM 00603 111234Z

YEAR'S DRY SEASON OFFENSIVE. WHILE REPORTING OF CASUALTIES HAD DOUBTLESS IMPROVED IN THE PAST YEAR, THESE FIGURES SHOW THAT THE FIRST PHASE OF THE KC DRY SEASON OFFENSIVE MARKED A DETERMINED COMMUNIST EFFORT TO CLOSE WITH FANK AND INFLICT SERIOUS DAMAGE.
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